



Mission Statement: To support and challenge all students to achieve personal and academic excellence in a student-centered environment.

BERLIN-BOYLSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 12, 2024, 5:00pm
Tahanto Regional Middle/High School
Multipurpose Room

Stream link <https://www.youtube.com/@bbrsdlive2893/streams>

This meeting may be recorded, and your image or voice may be broadcast.

School Committee: Mrs. Meagan Grill, Chair; Mrs. Julie Lee, Vice Chair; Mrs. Lori-Anne Hart, District Clerk; Mr. Michael Totman; Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti; Mrs. Julie Lee; Mrs. Lisa Mair

Administration: Ms. Carol Costello, Superintendent; Mr. Dan Ayala, Director of Facilities Ms. Nicole Bilotta, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Mr. John Campbell, Berlin Memorial Principal; Mrs. Jannel Fitzpatrick, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Ms. Nancy Konisky, Director of Finance & Operations; Ms. Renee Legendre, Tahanto Middle/High School Assistant Principal; Ms. Lisa Sequeira, Tahanto Middle/High School Principal; Ms. Sally Stukuls, Director of Curriculum and Grants, Grades 6-12; Ms. Cinthia Sykes, Boylston Elementary Principal

Also Present: Ms. Christina Medeiros and other members of the public

- I. **Call to Order** – Mrs. Grill called the meeting to order.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Public Comments** – Ms. Christina Medeiros, mother of BBRSD students had a public comment. She asked the committee not to scale back on nursing support for the schools for next year. She came to the meeting to help bring awareness of the medical needs in the schools and how to add more in the future. She wanted to make sure there is enough medical support to keep kids safe and healthy. In years prior, some nurses were funded with grant money. She noted last week 100 students were seen in the nurse’s office, in just one of the schools. Without proper staffing student safety could be compromised and it puts a strain on the current staff. Ms. Medeiros shared a personal story and expressed how important it is to have adequate nursing staff because they are integral helping students and making sure students get the proper healthcare throughout the day.
- IV. **Communications** – Mr. Totman received a communication about a survey that went out to students at TAH asking about sexual orientation. The survey was part of a civic class topic. Steps have been put in place since Ms. Carol Costello and Ms. Lisa Sequeira learned of it. Students pick out topics

and have them approved by the teacher. Students are not required to respond to the surveys. Mr. Totman wanted to know all the details about what was done with the information and if it opens up the district to any potential problems. Ms. Costello will check into the legality. She had spoken with the administrators and the teachers regarding the survey. Mr. Totman summarized the email and questions asked on the survey for the group. Ms. Sequeira explained how there is a requirement to be involved in civics action projects for graduation. Most topics are issues students are personally interested in. They are not told what particular area they need to do. She noted surveys are used often through the High School for various things. She spoke with the parent and provided context and an understanding of what happened. Ms. Sequeira then spoke with teacher and student and put locks on the survey. Part of the plan going forward is surveys need to have context at the beginning. This survey was not collecting emails of the students. Mr. Totman asks if the survey implies if there could there be issue in the schools. Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti noted the survey that was done before regarding Tahanto noted students felt safe. Ms. Sequeira explained most of the surveys were not answered, so she feels students understood it was not a requirement. The BBRSD admin team worked swiftly to work to address the situation. They will look into the legality and Ms. Costello will send the survey for the rest of the committee to see. Ms. Costello has been looking into BBRSD policy around surveys or communications going out.

V. Consent Agenda - Vote -motion made by Mrs. Julie Hart and seconded by Mrs. Julie Lee, 6-0, motion passes.

1. Payable Warrants
2. 2-09-2024 Budget Facilities and Safety Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
3. 2-27-2024 Open Meeting Minutes

VI. Business Items

1. Approval of the Student Opportunities Act Plan – **Vote** – Mrs. Lisa Mair asked about percentages of high needs students listed in the document provided. She noted the summary percentage was higher than she thought it should be. Mrs. Sally Stukuls explained these were numbers from DESE. Sometimes students can fall into more than one category, which would explain why the summary percentage is higher than the individual ones for each subgroup. DESE asks for a report every three years and wants to know which group is in the most need of support. They provide evidence program lists and have the district pick three that would help the district. She reviewed the topics they included. In the document it is just a breakdown of the current budget, not ask for additional funds. – **Motion made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lee, 6-0, motion passes.**
2. Approval of the FY25 Calendar – **Vote** – For the FY25 school year continuous PD has been added in, with more half days instead of full PD days. Some communications have made to committee about concerns with childcare on those days. There are 10 half days throughout the year. Mrs. Degliaberti noted a Facebook conversation was had about concerns from working parents about childcare shared by Mr. Adam Wilbur. He thought that childcare be included if calendar is voted in. Ms. Costello explained when she came onboard it was expressed to her to try to make changes for the betterment of the district. There are a number of districts who do do this. She noted that sometimes these changes are hard to make.

Administrators have worked hard on the calendar and it has been reviewed and endorsed by the teachers. These half days could be used to help make the changes the committee has been asking for. Having more consistent PD is more helpful than sporadic PD sessions throughout the year. BBRSD

wants to work in partnership with the families. If it is something ineffective then changes can be made going forward. BBRSD is trying to put things in place for working families. After school would normally be run with a buffer in between. They are looking to give children better opportunity to learn.

Mr. Totman voiced that there are not many back to back weeks of full school and that the schedule is very disruptive. He would like a middle ground and feels that parents shouldn't be charged if they need to use the afterschool during those days. Additionally, he noted it takes kids out of the classroom and disrupts their learning. Mr. Totman wanted to know how would BBRSD measure if the extra PD days are working and wants specifics on how they improved because of extra PD days. Mrs. Lee noted there are districts doing this with great success. Berlin and Boylston Rec. Departments are interested with helping with the childcare aspect. It is equivalent PD to what is done now, but this way PD is done more frequently. Mrs. Lee noted teachers want more time to collaborate together. Mr. Totman suggested doing PD the day after Thanksgiving. That day is a contractual obligation and many families go away during that time period. The PD is an opportunity across the schools for teachers to collaborate and enhance vertical articulation. If the Rec. programs have people come in it would not be a big cost to district. Mrs. Grill estimated around \$2000k. Mrs. Lee doesn't think the school should pay and parents should pay. Mr. Totman wants the school to pay since they put in the PD days. The funds would come from a revolving account if provided by the district.

Mrs. Mair proposed doing all PD in August and it would eliminate all the half days and students could start after Labor Day. That would not work because DESE wants PD to be done over time with staff. There are many mandated trainings upfront the first two days of school. Mr. Totman noted how the schedule is inconsistent in terms of full weeks. This schedule actually put the students in the classroom for more days. Mrs. Lee said with a half day its just a shorter version of their daily routine. She also noted all the PD falls on Wednesdays and Acton Boxborough does the same thing and has exception scores. Mrs. Degliaberti explained from the parent side sees the hardship, but sees the positives also on the school side. Mrs. Lee asked if childcare wasn't a problem is the calendar good to go. Once voted Mrs. Degliaberti wants it noted to the public the reasons for the decisions. Mr. Totman voiced he wants to communicate a concrete idea or goal and wants measurements in a year or two for the committee to look at. He expressed not wanting any type of flowery language. Measurements could be done through teacher surveys, teacher retention, etc. There are affluent districts doing weekly half days, but it is not something to do here. Mrs. Lee asked about nurses during that time. The nurses would be onsite during the PD days. – **Motion made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Julie Lee, 5-1, motion passes.**

3. Tahanto MS and HS Course of Study – **Vote** – Mrs. Lee wanted to know often electives changed and if they do not, why is that. Ms. Sequeira explained they change based on teacher certification and what they are qualified to teach. Also scheduling/who is available to teach at certain times, available resources, and planning time available, all factor in. Mr. Totman asked how human geography fulfills financial literacy course. The class content goes over the economics of where people live and satisfies that portion of it. In the document the red is going to be taken out and the yellow are things that were updated. The highlights were done to be easier for the committee to see what was changed. Mrs. Degliaberti asked about the ecology course. The course could not be

supported with current staffing. The course of studies is posted online so the students can review the classes they are selecting. Mrs. Mair noted some typos. If the committee sees typos an email needs to be sent over. The committee voted to approve the document as written and typos will be fixed before posting. **Motion made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Julie Lee, 6-0, motion passes.**

VII. Upcoming Meeting

- March 19, 2024 Budget Hearing and Vote – Friday to have budget document for online.
- School choice will be addressed in April

Meeting adjourned at 6:31pm

The listing of items is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may, in fact, be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

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